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ABSTRACT

Noting that language study (one leg of the traditional English tripod of language, literature, and composition) has received mixed attention internationally and is almost forgotten in North America, this paper presents a rationale for researching language awareness and three instruments that can be used in such research. The paper begins with definitions of "language awareness," and then discusses the attention given to language awareness in the United Kingdom and in Canada. The paper then discusses a language awareness study in progress. Contains 19 references. Teacher interview questions, a teacher questionnaire, a student questionnaire, and a student questionnaire with suggested answers are attached. (RS)

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ED 379 686

# Language Awareness Surveys: A Rationale and Three Instruments.

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Language Awareness Surveys:

A Rationale and Three Instruments.

The three legs of the traditional English tripod (language, literature, and composition) have been competitors for most of the 20th Century for time and emphasis in the English classroom. In North America, while the past 25 years have seen substantial changes in the teaching of written composition and somewhat lesser changes in the teaching of literature, the teaching of language has pretty well been bogged down in traditional grammar and standard usage.

The teaching of written composition has undergone changes so great that Hairston (1981) describes them as a paradigm shift. Writing classrooms of the 90's bear little resemblance to their predecessors of the 60's, due at least in part to the teacher in-service provided by the National Writing Projects. Literary theory, too, has made dramatic shifts in the past thirty years, but as Beech (1993) points out, the new methods have not seriously challenged New Critical approaches in secondary and post-secondary English classrooms, perhaps because "there has been little systematic attempt to translate theory into practice" (p. 3).

Internationally, the third leg of the traditional tripod, language study, has received mixed attention: in the United Kingdom a movement known variously as "language awareness," "knowledge about language" and "teaching about

language" has been thriving for over twenty years (Doughty, Pearce and Thornton, 1971; Hawkins, 1992), but in North America school language study is probably more aptly described by the title of Kelly and Small's (1987) monograph, Language, the Forgotten Content. In the United Kingdom, the "language awareness" movement has been underway for over 20 years and has produced a wide-ranging debate and a large number of resources.

## Language Awareness Defined

Defined by the National Congress on Language in Education Working Party as "a person's sensitivity to and conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life" (Donmal, 1985, p. 7), language awareness is seen to have both a cognitive aspect ("developing awareness of pattern, contrast, system, units, categories, rules of language in use and the ability to reflect on them, to make pertinent interpretative judgements and to convey meaning appropriately and effectively") and an affective aspect ("forming attitudes, awakening and developing attention, sensitivity, curiosity, interest and aesthetic response"). (p.7) The goals of language awareness are

> ...to bring pupils to increase the language resources available to them and to foster their mastery of them, to develop the sensitivity and level of consciousness they bring to their experience of language in everyday school and social contexts and eventually to improve their effectiveness as, for

example, citizens, or as consumers and in their working life. (p. 7)

## Language Awareness in the United Kingdom

Language awareness is now a relatively mature movement in the United Kingdom, and teachers and academics have addressed a wide range of questions which North Americans may find helpful in reforming language teaching on this continent. The frameworks, methods, and materials developed include:

- --general introductions to language awareness (Donmall [1985] and Hawkins [1987] and summaries of the work of various committees and commissions (Hawkins [1992] and Mittins [1991, Chapters 1 and 2]).
- --the journal Language Awareness began publication in 1992.
- --professional books describe methods for teaching language in secondary schools (Keen, 1993, Language and the English Curriculum; Shepherd, 1993, Playing the Language Game; Mittins, 1991, Language Awareness for Teachers).
- --curriculum materials have been developed to present a consistent, coherent program of language studies throughout the school system (Cox, 1989).
- --programs have been designed to train prospective English teachers (Carter, 1992 and 1993).
- --scholarly conferences have produced such volumes as James and Garrett's (1992) Language Awareness in the Classroom and Fairclough's (1992) Critical Language

Awareness.

It is also instructive that language awareness is not limited to elementary and secondary English classrooms: much of the original work in the United Kingdom was a collaboration between modern language teachers and English teachers (see Hawkins, 1987).

## Needed Research in Language Awareness: A Canadian Perspective

In a recent paper (Belanger in press), I suggested that to improve the teaching of the English language in Canadian secondary schools, researchers must address a number of central questions:

1. A conceptual basis for language awareness in the schools: elementary classrooms, secondary English classrooms, modern language classrooms, university classrooms, and language in the home. What should educated human beings know about their language and the languages of others and why? What do we currently know and what research and/or theory are required to develop a conceptual basis?

2. Review of the history and research foundation of language awareness. Which findings from other jurisdictions might transfer directly to the Canadian context? Which need to be reexamined in a Canadian context? Which research questions are suggested?

3. What are current issues in language awareness and how might they be researched? Examples include linguistic tolerance, gender issues, heritage languages, and multiculturalism.

4. Correctness. The Standard English/traditional grammar wars: What do we know and what do we need to know about teaching Standard English. (This one is dirty work, but someone has to do it).

5. What is the role of critical language awareness in education? What is the relationship between CLA and literature? manufacturing consent? public doublespeak?

6. Language awareness and post-secondary education: pre-service, in-service, materials for teachers, the LINC materials. Which research questions arise from these?

7. School-based research: what do we know about current language curricula in the schools and what do we need to know? Which research methodologies will be appropriate?

8. Resources: systematic means for gathering and evaluating resources in language awareness.

9. The role of modern and heritage languages in language awareness.

A Language Awareness Study in Progress

The materials presented below address question 7 and are part of ongoing research into how English language is taught to native speakers of English in Canadian schools. The first study (Belanger and Evans, 1993) analyzed the language component of curriculum guides, textbooks, and province-wide examinations used in the Province of Ontario between 1938 and 1990. The research revealed three eras in language study in Ontario schools: until the mid-1960s, language study was basically standard usage taught through the vehicle of traditional grammar; from the mid 1960s until the early 1980s, language study was broadened to include much of current linguistic scholarship (dialect study, structural and transformational grammars; slang; the language of advertising; etymology; register; and so on); after the early 1980s, language began to fade from the curriculum, pushed out, we speculate, by the revolutions in the teaching of composition and literature.

The current study which moves from the curriculum of Ontario to classrooms in British Columbia explores what a sample of teachers are teaching in their English language study units and what students are learning. It does this by means of a teacher questionnaire, a teacher interview, and a student survey. The questionnaire, survey, and interview schedules were developed and then sent to a panel of teachers and experts for critique. The revised student surveys were piloted with four grade-nine students (two of whom were ESL students) and

revised once more on the basis of this. The twice-revised surveys are ready to pilot with a class of grade-nine students and following fine-tuning will be administered to 75 grade-nine and 75 grade-eleven students. The teacher questionnaire was piloted with three teachers and revised. I have asked permission to use the questionnaire with five English departments (average 10 teachers each) and I have asked to interview ten teachers.

The Instruments. Each of the four instruments is presented in a separate section below:

1. Teacher interview questions
2. Teacher questionnaire
3. Student questionnaire
4. Student questionnaire with suggested answers.

1. Teacher interview questions

A. Rationale and Components:
What are your goals for teaching language to your students?
Which components of language study do you emphasize most?
Which do you emphasize least?

B. Lessons and Units:
What percentage of your course is devoted to language study?
Does this differ for each grade level?
Please describe a lesson or a unit which you like to teach.
How has your language program evolved over the years?
May I have copies of any lesson plans or unit plans you use to teach language?
Do you have a scope and sequence (mental or on paper) which describes what students will learn as they progress through the grades? If so, please describe it.

C. Methods and Materials:
Please describe the methods you use to teach language.
Have these methods changed over the years? If so, how?
Which student textbooks do you use? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
Which audio-visual materials do you use? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

D. The future:
What will the major characteristics of language study in your class be in the year 2001? How will they differ from your present practices? Why?
If you could design a language curriculum which would be taught to all students in grades eight to twelve, what would the major features of this curriculum be?

E. Academic/avocational background in language study:
How many language or linguistic courses did you complete as an undergraduate student? as a graduate student?
Please describe the content of these courses.
How have these courses influenced your teaching?
Please describe any school or district language study in-service you have participated in.
Please comment on any school textbooks which have helped to shape the way you teach language and describe what you have learned from these textbooks.
Please note any books or articles which have contributed to your knowledge about teaching language.

2. Teacher questionnaire

Language Awareness in the Classroom Survey
Joe Belanger, UBC
April 1995 School: _____

This is a five-page questionnaire; the average time to answer all questions is 25 minutes. Please answer any of the questions which you feel comfortable answering. Please do not let one insensitive question on my part prevent you from completing the questionnaire.

It is important to know what role language teaching plays in secondary English classes, so even if you do not teach language at all as part of your English program, please fill out the parts of the questionnaire which apply to you.

1. Background information:

What were your university majors? _____

minors_____?

What percentage of your time do you currently devote to teaching English? _____

Please list other subjects taught and the percentage of your teaching load devoted to each

_____

_____

_____

2. Your background in language/linguistics study:

Number of university courses you have taken in language ____

Please note anything significant about them (professor, topic, content, impact)

_____

_____

_____

In the past five years (or so) how many inservice or conference sessions on language have you attended? _____
Please indicate below anything you remember about them (e.g., presenter, topic, content, impact, venue).

_____

_____

_____

3. Please estimate the number of hours each year you spend teaching the following topics (leave blank if not covered):

| Topic | Grade Level 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Punctuation, sentence sense | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Usage (e.g, subject-verb agr) | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Grammar | | | | | |
| Traditional Grammar | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Structural Grammar | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Transformational Grammar | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| History of the English language | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Canadian English | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Dialects (British, U.S.) | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Etymology | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Vocabulary | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Spelling | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Language games or puzzles | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Language of equity (racial, gender) | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Language of manipulation (advertising, manufacturing consent, public doublespeak) | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Relationships between English and Modern or Asian languages | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Language of the home/ child language development | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Sentence combining | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Other language topics: | | | | | |
| 1. _____ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. _____ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. _____ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

3. What percentage of the language activities are
   Integrated (taught as part of literature or composition classes) _____
   Taught as separate units? _____

4. On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) please rate the following methods of teaching punctuation and correct usage.

| | poor | | | | excellent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Directly and sequentially in lessons based on explanations and exercises in textbooks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Teaching lessons based on errors you find in students' written work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Indirectly and individually through correcting errors in students' papers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Other _____ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. Which types of language activities do you find most successful? Least successful?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Please indicate which textbooks and materials you use to teach language. In the left margin, please indicate whether you:
   R use the book regularly
   S seldom use the book
   P used the book in the past.
   _ have not used the book

_____ Penner and McConnell, Learning English

_____ Penner and McConnell, Learning Language

_____ Penner and McConnell, Language on Paper

_____ McConnell, Our Own Voice

_____ Littell and Littell, The Language of Man (series)

_____ Shephard and MacDonald, Grammar Is (or other books in the Language Matters series).

_____ Irmscher, et al., Holt English: Language and Writing

_____ Seidel, Grammar One

_____ Murphy, Basic Grammar in Use

_____ Reynolds, Mastering Essential English Skills.

_____ Steinberg, Games Language People Play

_____ Robinson, et al., Bridges

7. Please list the language textbooks you currently use (if they are not listed in item 6).

8. Please list any additional resources you use to teach language.

9. What are your goals for language study?

10. Which measures of student growth and achievement in language do you use (e.g., language portfolios, language projects, written compositions, classroom tests, standardized tests)?

11. Have the way you teach language or the activities and materials you use changed in the past five years? Please describe any changes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

12. Please comment on any school textbooks which have helped to shape the way you teach language and describe what you have learned from these textbooks.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. Please note any books or articles about language or language learning which have contributed to your knowledge about teaching language.

_____

_____

_____

_____

14. I would appreciate receiving copies of any language lessons, units, tests, or other materials you use. If you wish to remain anonymous, just slip them in a separate envelope and mail them to me (Language Education, UBC, V6T 1Z5). If you would be willing to discuss them with me, please telephone me at 822-5479 (office) or 224-3734 (home).
15. Personal response to the questionnaire. I would appreciate any comments you might offer on this questionnaire: how could I improve it? If any questions are unclear, please list the numbers _____.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Student Survey

Student Language Awareness Survey

Please complete as much of this survey as you are able to do. It is a long survey and we do not expect anyone to finish it completely.

As part of an international interest in what students know about the English language, we have constructed the following survey. Some of the questions have right or wrong answers, but many just ask for your opinion or probe your sensitivity to options in language usage.

Obviously, the survey is anonymous and no one will know how you answered any question, but we hope that you will be honor bound to do your best. If you finish early, please go back through the paper and make any changes you feel are needed.

Personal information: (It would help us if you answered all of these questions, but you are not obligated to do so):

Grade level: _____

Gender: Female _____ Male ____

Was English the first language that you learned? ____

If not, how many years have you spoken English? _____

What is your first language? _____

If you are studying any other languages in school this year, please list them.

_____

_____

_____

Which additional languages do you speak?

_____

_____

_____

1. Countries, mountains, cities, streets, and public buildings are often named in memory of people, or by the names used by the original inhabitants, or by names of other cities or geographical features. Describe the origins of any of the following names you know (or can guess).

Canada _____

Victoria _____

Vancouver _____

Pattullo Bridge _____

Salish Drive _____

Alberta _____

2. People in one English-speaking country often develop names for objects which are different from those used by other speakers of English. Please give the Canadian equivalent of the following British terms.

   boot (of a car) _____

   wireless _____

   torch _____

   lorry _____

   jumper _____

   Biro _____

3. Some abbreviations are so common that we seldom think about the words that they stand for. Please list the root words in the following abbreviations

   U. N. (as in U. N. Peacekeepers) _____

   RSVP (RSVP by March 9) _____

   SOS (the ship sent an SOS) _____

   a.m. (as in 11:00 a.m.) _____

   A.D. (the year A.D. 44) _____

   e.g. (e.g., eggs and bacon) _____

4. Etymology is the study of word roots and word origins. These histories or stories of how words are formed are usually not obvious, but sometimes we can guess the sources. Describe the origins of any words below which you know (or can guess).

   Marathon _____

   Hoover (vacuum cleaner) _____

   July _____

   Saturday _____

   watt (100-watt light) _____

   Levis (jeans) _____

   atlas _____

   Oscar (film award) _____

5. English is a language which likes to borrow words from other languages. Please write the name of the language which is the source for these borrowings:

   bungalow _____

   hamburger _____

   chinook _____

   tycoon _____

   sofa _____

   rodeo _____

   piano _____

   venetian blind _____

   kindergarten _____

   slalom _____

   menu _____

6. When speaking and writing, we use different levels of formality depending upon our audience. Please write a sentence or two for the audience in each of the following situations:

   You need to borrow five dollars. Please make the request to:

   i. A member of your family: _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   ii. Your best friend _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   iii. Your school principal _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. English speakers use many colorful expressions to present their ideas.

Some of these expressions have obscure origins. For example, the expression "the whole nine yards" (indicating that everything is being taken into consideration) comes from early cement trucks which held nine cubic yards of cement. The person who took the complete load took the whole nine yards.

Please give the meaning and the origin of each of the following expressions. At the end of the list, please add any expressions that you use.

i. expressions you may have heard.

a. to have a chip on your shoulder

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

b. to let the cat out of the bag

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

c. to get the sack

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

d. to look a gift horse in the mouth

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

e. to get off scot free

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

ii. expressions you use.

a. please list one other expression you use _____

_____

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

b. please list one other expression you use _____

_____

meaning _____

_____

origin _____

_____

8. Editing. The following is a letter to the editor which requires formal, correct English. Please edit the letter to correct any errors.

March 15 1995

The editor
Vancouver sun
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear editor

Today the number one killer of teenagers are accidents, most involved drinking and driving. Many teenagers seem to frequently feel invincible. And do not think that they could be killed when they ride in a car driven by a drunk driver, however, teenagers are more likely to get killed in alcohol related car accidents than they are by any disease. Irregardless, if everyone looked out for their friends, this wouldn't happen

In 1993 in british columbia 160 people were killed in accidents involving drunk drivers. A slight increase from 1992 when 156 were killed, but down from the 180 killed in 1991 and the 214 killed in 1990. During the past five years, over 850 people were killed by impaired drivers. Representing more than half of the students enrolled in the average Vancouver secondary school. More than one in every three traffic deaths (37 percent) were caused by a drunken driver.

And so I urge you as a responsible citizen to not drink and drive. And more important, don't get in a car with someone whom has been drinking. Like the CounterAttack advertisements stresses, drunk drivers very often kill their closest friends, the people sitting in the passenger seats of their cars. It is dangerous to be a drunk drivers friend.

yours truely,

Chris Jaeger

9. Standard Usage. In the sentences below, please circle the word or punctuation mark you would choose for more formal writing (say, an essay in your English class).

   a. (Who, Whom) owns this pencil?

   b The data for our survey (has, have) been collected.

   c. She said the chocolates are to be divided between (you and I, you and me).

   d. (May, Can) I speak now?

   e. The cat made (it's, its) hunger known.

   f. Chris asked, "Who wrote this (?", "?)

   g. There are (less, fewer) people present than we anticipated.

   h. Pam is taller than (she, her).

   i. During the ceremony each new mother was presented with (her, their) certificate.

   j. If he (was, were) here, he would be pleased.

10. English grammars

   a. Please name the part of speech underlined in each of the following sentences. If you know another name (that is, another grammar) please write it in the second blank.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. <u>Many</u> students enjoy writing Haiku. | 1. _____ | |
| | 1. _____ | |
| 2. My friend <u>likes</u> talking. | 2. _____ | |
| | 2. _____ | |
| 3. My <u>pet</u> does not bark. | 3. _____ | |
| | 3. _____ | |
| 4. Please don't walk so <u>slowly</u>. | 4. _____ | |
| | 4. _____ | |
| 5. You talk too <u>much</u>. | 5. _____ | |
| | 5. _____ | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6. I prefer hiking; <u>nevertheless</u>, I'll join you in a swim Friday. | 6. _____ | |
| | 6. _____ | |
| 7. In my telescope I saw both Venus <u>and</u> Jupiter. | 7. _____ | |
| | 7. _____ | |
| 8. <u>Before</u> you lie in the sun, apply a good lotion. | 8. _____ | |
| | 8. _____ | |
| 9. <u>Oh</u> I'd never do that. | 9. _____ | |
| | 9. _____ | |
| 10. Place the book <u>on</u> the table | 10. _____ | |
| | 10. _____ | |

b. To "parse" a word in a sentence is to explain the class and grammatical relation of the word in the sentence. For example, the adjectives and adverbs in the sentence "Strong was the soul of the warrior and brightly flashed his broadsword" are parsed:

| Word | Class | Grammatical relation |
|---|---|---|
| Strong | Adjective, Qualitative | Predicate describing |
| the | Adjective, Demonstrative | pointing out "warrior" |
| brightly | Adverb, Manner | modifying "flashed" |

Parse the verbs in the following sentence:

If Masami were here, she would help us

| Word | Class | Grammatical relation |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

c. Please underline the simple subject of the main clause in the following sentence.

After the rain came, our tent was soaked.

d. Please underline the complete predicate in the following sentence.

> Our friend Patti, who was the school's strongest high jumper, won the provincial championship with ease.

e. Please underline the subordinate clause in the following sentence.

> Because I knew November weather in Vancouver, I brought my umbrella to school.

f. Using any system of diagramming you know, please make a sentence diagram of the following sentence (If you know more than one system, please use the back of this page to make another diagram):

> The wind and rain made our journey uncomfortable.

11. Varieties of usage.

a. Which of the following sentences sounds more correct to you? Please place a check after the sentence you prefer and explain the reason it sounds correct.

The menu listed scramble eggs. ____
The menu listed scrambled eggs. ____

Explain: _____

_____

I use to do homework on Saturdays. ____
I used to do homework on Saturdays. ____

Explain: _____

_____

To boldly go where no one else has gone is the mission of Star Trek. ____
To go boldly where no one else has gone is the mission of Star Trek. ____

Explain: _____

_____

b. Which of the following sentences is correctly punctuated or capitalized? Please place a check following the sentence you prefer and then explain your choice.

He asked for directions to the mens room. ____
He asked for directions to the men's room. ____

Explain: _____

_____

Rajinder is a first-rate student. ____
Rajinder is a first rate stuqent. ____

Explain: _____

_____

I am enjoying my science course this year. ____
I am enjoying my Science course this year. ____

Explain: _____

_____

12. Spelling and Pronunciation.

a. Please draw a circle around the word which rhymes with the way you pronounce the following words. For the first two words, please tell how you think they are pronounced in England and the United States.

"semi" (a semi-truck) rhymes with 1. my 2. me

In England "semi" rhymes with 1. my 2. me
In the United States "semi" rhymes with 1. my 2. me

"aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant

In England "aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant
In the United States "aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant

"again" rhymes with 1. pain 2. pen 3. pin

the "z" in "zebra" is pronounced 1. zee 2. zed

the "ei" in "either" is pronounced 1. my 2. me

the "a" in "ration" is pronounced like the "a" in 1. cat 2. date

b. Some words have more than one correct spelling.

Please circle the spelling you prefer and then circle the way think it might be spelled in England and the United States.

Choice: 1. color 2. colour

In England the spelling is 1. color 2. colour

In the United States the spelling is

1. color 2. colour

Choice: 1. center 2. centre

In England the spelling is 1. center 2. centre

In the United States the spelling is

1. center 2. centre

Choice: (for the bank draft) 1. cheque 2. check

In England the spelling is 1. cheque 2. check

In the United States the spelling is

1. cheque 2. check

Choice: 1. gray 2. grey

In England the spelling is 1. gray 2. grey

In the United States the spelling is

1. gray 2. grey

c. Some words have different spellings (and often pronunciations) depending on how they are used in a sentence. In the following sentences, please choose the word you would normally use.

1. I hope to earn my driver's (licence, license) soon.

2. We asked for our teacher's (advice, advise) about the problem.

3. You will need to (device, devise) a new plan.

d. Words called "homographs" may be pronounced in two or more ways depending on the meaning. For example, wind rhymes with pinned when it is moving air, but with find when it describes a turning motion:

The wind howled through the mountain pass.
I asked mother to wind the clock.

The words row and sow are also homographs. Please use either row or sow in two sentences which show differences in meaning.

1. _____

2. _____

Please list any other homographs you know: _____

_____

e. Canadians generally pronounce the word film in one of two ways: as one syllable (film) or as two (fil-um).

Please circle the pronunciation which you use

film or fil-um

Which pronunciation do your friends use?

film or fil-um

Which pronunciation do adults you know use?

film or fil-um

Do you know any adults who use the other pronunciation? If so, please describe their language backgrounds.

_____

Thank you for your interest and assistance. As we said in the beginning, we do not think that anyone will be able to finish the survey completely. We would be interested in your response to the questions.

Did you have time to answer all of the questions you knew the answers to? Yes No

What was the most interesting question? (number) _____

Please tell us anything about the survey that you would like us to know. (use the back of this sheet if necessary).

_____

_____

_____

Student Language Awareness Survey

Please complete as much of this survey as you are able to do. It is a long survey and we do not expect anyone to finish it completely.

As part of an international interest in what students know about the English language, we have constructed the following survey. Some of the questions have right or wrong answers, but many just ask for your opinion or probe your sensitivity to options in language usage.

Obviously, the survey is anonymous and no one will know how you answered any question, but we hope that you will be honor bound to do your best. If you finish early, please go back through the paper and make any changes you feel are needed.

Personal information: (It would help us if you answered all of these questions, but you are not obligated to do so):

Grade level: _____

Gender: Female _____ Male ____

Was English the first language that you learned? ____

If not, how many years have you spoken English? _____

What is your first language? _____

If you are studying any other languages in school this year, please list them.

_____

_____

_____

Which additional languages do you speak?

_____

_____

1. Countries, mountains, cities, streets, and public buildings are often named in memory of people, or by the names used by the original inhabitants, or by names of other cities or geographical features. Describe the origins of any of the following names you know (or can guess).

Canada Iroquoian: "kanata" villiage, community

Victoria Queen Victoria of England

Vancouver Captain George Vancouver who explored the West Coast of North America during the summers of 1792-3-4; he spent these winters in Hawaii.

Pattullo Bridge Thomas Pattullo, Premier of B.C., 1933 to 1941.

Salish Drive Salish, First Nations People

Alberta Princess Louise Caroline Alberta, 4th Daughter of Queen Victoria

2. People in one English-speaking country often develop names for objects which are different from those used by other speakers of English. Please give the Canadian equivalent of the following British terms.

   boot (of a car) trunk
   wireless radio
   torch flashlight
   lorry truck
   jumper sweater
   Biro ballpoint pen (named after its inventor, Laszlo Biro
   speedboots running shoes

3. Some abbreviations are so common that we seldom think about the words that they stand for. Please list the root words in the following abbreviations
   TV (watching TV) television
   U. N. (as in U. N. Peacekeepers) United Nations
   RSVP (RSVP by March 9) respondes s'il vous plait (please answer)
   SOS (the ship sent an SOS) distress signal. Does not stand for "Save our Souls [Ship]." It was adopted in 1908 because it was easy to remember and transmit in Morse code: three dots, three dashes, three dots.
   a.m. (as in 11:00 a.m.) "ante meridiem"; before noon.
   A.D. (the year A.D. 44) "anno Domini"; in the year of our Lord; marks the beginning of the Christian calendar.
   e.g. (e.g., eggs and bacon) "exempli gratia"; for example.

4. Etymology is the study of word roots and word origins. These histories or stories of how words are formed are usually not obvious, but sometimes we can guess the sources. Describe the origins of any words below which you know (or can guess). [Source: Martin Manser, Dictionary of Eponyms, Penguin, 1988]
   Marathon Phidippides, a messanger, ran from the Plains of Marathon in 490 B.C. to bring news of Athenian victory in battle. Modern marathon (26 miles 385 yards) is the distance between Windsor Castle and the king's box in London's Olympic stadium (1908 Olympics).
   Hoover (vacuum cleaner) Named after the owner of the first vacuum cleaner company [not the inventor].
   July. Julius Caesar named this month after himself; he invented the Julian calendar which added the months January and February to the old Roman calendar. His nephew and adopted son, Augustus, named August (formerly "Sextils" or sixth month) after himself, taking one day from February so that August could have as many days as July.
   Saturday. the Roman god of Agriculture, Saturn.
   watt (100-watt light). Sir James Watt, also developed the steam engine.
   Levis (jeans). Levi Strauss, San Francisco clothing merchant at the time of the California gold rush, added rivets to the corners of the pockets so that they wouldn't tear when loaded with ore.

atlas. a Titan in Greek mythology; condemned to carry the heavens on his shoulders as a punishment for trying to overthrow the chief god, Zeus.
Oscar (film award). a librarian thought the statues awarded to movie stars looked like her uncle Oscar (Oscar Pierce of Texas).

5. English is a language which likes to borrow words from other languages. Please write the name of the language which is the source for these borrowings:
   bungalow one of about 26,000 Hindi words in English; means "of Bengal," a former Indian province.
   hamburger Hamburg, Germany; sandwich introduced to North America at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904.
   chinook a warm wind; named after the Chinook First Nations people who resided at the mouth of the Columbia River [between Washington and Oregon].
   tycoon an American phonetic spelling of the Japanese word "taikun," or "great prince."
   sofa from the Arabic word "suffah," cushion or long bench.
   rodeo Spanish "rounding up or surrounding cattle"; similar roots to "rotary."
   piano Italian; short for pianoforte meaning "soft-loud."
   venetian blind Venice, Italy. In Venice they are called "persiani" because they were imported from Persia.
   kindergarten German. Literally "child's garden" after Froebel's theory that young children should be taught according to their natural instincts by stimulating and creating interest.
   slalom Norwegian; "sloping track."
   menu French "menu de repas" or meal list.

6. When speaking and writing, we use different levels of formality depending upon our audience. Please write a sentence or two for the audience in each of the following situations: You need to borrow five dollars. Please make the request to:
   i. A member of your family: Mom. Can I borrow five dollars? [Depending on the situation, you may or may not need to indicate why you want it or when you'll pay it back].

   ii. Your best friend Hi Chris. Got a five you can lend me? Pay you back on Saturday. [Language is more tentative, less formal. Unlike your mother or principal, you do not assume that your friend has five dollars; the way you phrase the question allows the person to decline graciously. You may or may not need to tell what you need it for; when you will return it is probably important.]

   iii. Your school principal Mrs. Blank. I forgot to bring my five dollars this morning and because of this I won't be able to attend the play. Could you lend me five dollars until tomorrow? [Language is most formal; you probably begin with the reason you need it; you tell when you will repay it.]

7. English speakers use many colorful expressions to present their ideas.

Some of these expressions have obscure origins. For example, the expression "the whole nine yards" (indicating that everything is being taken into consideration) comes from early cement trucks which held nine cubic yards of cement. The person who took the complete load took the whole nine yards.

Please give the meaning and the origin of each of the following expressions. At the end of the list, please add any expressions that you use.

i. expressions you may have heard.

a. to have a chip on your shoulder
meaning looking for a fight
origin Said that loggers would place a chip of wood on their shoulders, daring anyone to knock it off. The person who did was in for a fight.

b. to let the cat out of the bag

meaning divulge a secret.
origin In the market places of England years ago it was said that traders would place a cat in a bag, claiming it was a pig. Unwary customers might buy a cat in a bag or a pig in a poke.

c. to get the sack

meaning lose one's job.
origin One story suggests that workmen generally carried their tools in a sack, leaving the sack at the worksite when they went home at night. If an employee were to be fired, he would be handed his "sack" and paycheque at the end of the day. Another story is that Romans tied criminals in sacks and threw them in the Tiber.

d. to look a gift horse in the mouth
meaning do not try to find fault with a gift that's offered; accept it gladly.
origin a horse's age can be calculated by looking at its teeth. If given a horse, a person who looked at the teeth was trying to find fault with it.

e. to get off scot free
meaning avoid paying taxes.
origin A "scot" was a municipal tax in early England

ii. expressions you use.

a. please list one other expression you use _____
meaning _____
origin _____

b. please list one other expression you use _____
meaning _____
origin _____

8. Editing. The following is a letter to the editor which requires formal, correct English. Please edit the letter to correct any errors.

March 15[,] 1995

The [E]ditor [end punctuation optional]
Vancouver [S]un [some also underline the city]
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear [E]ditor[:]

Today the number one killer of teenagers are [is] accidents[.] [M]ost involve[] drinking and driving. [Frequently] many teenagers seem to [x] feel invincible[,] [a]nd do not think that they could be killed when they ride in a car driven by a drunk driver[;] however, teenagers are more likely to get killed in alcohol[-] related car accidents than they are by any disease. [Ir]Regardless, if [teenagers] looked out for their friends, this would[ ] n[o]t happen[.]

In 1993 in [B]ritish [C]olumbia 160 people were killed in accidents involving drunk drivers[,] [a] slight increase from 1992 when 156 were killed, but down from the 180 killed in 1991 and the 214 killed in 1990. During the past five years, over 850 people were killed by impaired drivers[,] [r]epresenting more than [one-]half of the students enrolled in the average Vancouver secondary school. More than one in every three traffic deaths (37 percent) [was] caused by a drunken driver.

And so I urge you as a responsible citizen to not drink and drive. And more important[ly], don't get in a car with someone who[ ] has been drinking. [As] the CounterAttack advertisements stress[], drunk drivers very often kill their closest friends, the people sitting in the passenger seats of their cars. It is dangerous to be a drunk driver[']s friend.

[Y]ours tru[/]ly[,]

Chris Jaeger

9. Standard Usage. In the sentences below, please circle the word or punctuation mark you would choose for more formal speaking or writing (say, an essay in your English class).

   a. (Who, Whom) owns this pencil?

   b The data for our survey (has, have) been collected.

   c. She said the chocolates are to be divided between (you and I, you and me).

   d. (May, Can) I speak now?

   e. The cat made (it's, its) hunger known.

   f. Chris asked, "Who wrote this (?", "?)

   g. There are (less, fewer) people present than we anticipated.

   h. Pam is taller than (she, her).

   i. During the ceremony each new mother was presented with (her, their) certificate.

   j. If he (was, were) here, he would be pleased.

10. English grammars

   a. Please name the part of speech underlined in each of the following sentences.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Many students enjoy writing Haiku. | 1. adjective |
| 2. My friend likes talking. | 2. verb |
| 3. My pet does not bark. | 3. noun |
| 4. Please don't walk so slowly. | 4. adverb |
| 5. You talk too much. | 5. adverb |
| 6. I prefer hiking; nevertheless, I'll join you in a swim Friday. | 6. conjunctive adverb |
| 7. In my telescope I saw both Venus and Jupiter. | 7. coordinating conjunction |
| 8. Before you lie in the sun, apply a good lotion. | 8. subordinating conjunction |
| 9. Oh I would never do that. | 9. interjection |
| 10. Place the book on the table | 10. preposition |

b. To "parse" a word in a sentence is to explain the class and grammatical relation of the word in the sentence. For example, the adjectives and adverbs in the sentence "Strong was the soul of the warrior and brightly flashed his broadsword" are parsed:

| Word | Class | Grammatical relation |
|---|---|---|
| Strong | Adjective, Qualitative | Predicate describing |
| the | Adjective, Demonstrative | pointing out "warrior" |
| brightly | Adverb, Manner | modifying "flashed" |

Parse the verbs in the following sentence:

If Masami were here, she would help us

| Word | Class | Form | Grammatical relation |
|---|---|---|---|
| were | verb intransitive strong | subjunctive, past third pers. sing. | agrees with subj. Masami |
| would | verb intransitive modal aux. | indicative, past third pers. sing. | agrees with subj. she |
| help | verb transitive weak | active, infinitive present | infin. complement of would |

c. Please underline the simple subject of the main clause in the following sentence.

After the rain came, our tent was soaked.

d. Please underline the complete predicate in the following sentence.

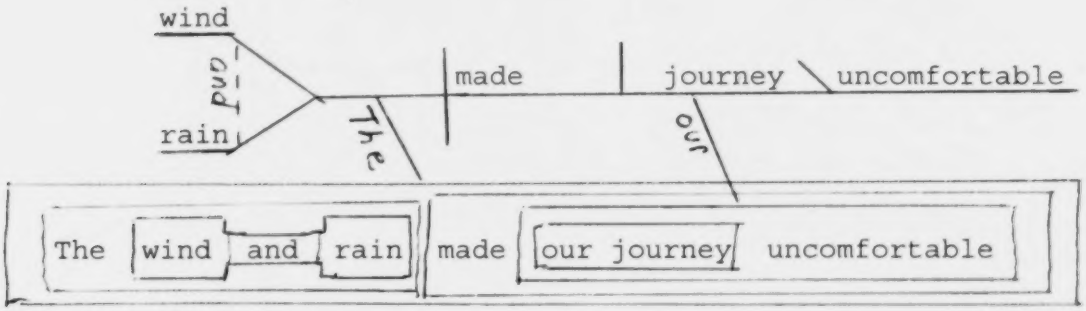
Our friend Patti, who was the school's strongest high jumper, won the provincial championship with ease.

e. Please underline the subordinate clause in the following sentence.

Because I knew November weather in Vancouver, I brought my umbrella to school.

f. Using any system of diagramming you know, please make a sentence diagram of the following sentence (If you know more than one system, please use the back of this page to make another diagram):

The wind and rain made our journey uncomfortable.




11. Varieties of usage.

a. Which of the following sentences sounds more correct to you? Please place a check after the sentence you prefer and explain the reason it sounds correct.

The menu listed scramble eggs. ____
The menu listed scrambled eggs. _x_

Explain: past participle is used as an adjective

I use to do homework on Saturdays. ____
I used to do homework on Saturdays. _x_

Explain: The "d" is seldom pronounced, but the idiom requires the past tense

To boldly go where no one else has gone is the mission of Star Treck. ____
To go boldly where no one else has gone is the mission of Star Treck. _x_

Explain: Some authorities insist on not splitting the two parts of the infinitive "to go" with an adverb. Many others do not feel it is a useful distinction.

b. Which of the following sentences is correctly punctuated or capitalized? Please place a check following the sentence you prefer and then explain your choice.

He asked for directions to the mens room. ____
He asked for directions to the men's room. _x_

Explain: possession is shown by adding "'s" to words which end in any letter except "s".

Rajinder is a first-rate student. _x_
Rajinder is a first rate student. ____

Explain: compound adjectives are hyphenated [they work together to modify the noun; they cannot be reversed {you cannot say a 'rate first student'}].

I am enjoying my science course this year. ____
I am enjoying my Science course this year. _x_

Explain: the names of school subjects are capitalized only when they are the titles of specific courses: Science 9, Mathematics 11.

12. Spelling and Pronunciation.

a. Please draw a circle around the word which rhymes with the way you pronounce the following words. For the first two words, please tell how you think they are pronounced in England and the United States.

"semi" (a semi-truck) rhymes with 1. my 2. me

In England "semi" rhymes with 1. my 2. me
In the United States "semi" rhymes with 1. my 2. me

"aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant

In England "aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant
In the United States "aunt" rhymes with 1. haunt 2. pant

"again" rhymes with 1. pain 2. pen 3. pin

the "z" in "zebra" is pronounced 1. zee 2. zed

the "ei" in "either" is pronounced 1. my 2. me

the "a" in "ration" is pronounced like the "a" in 1. cat 2. date

b. Some words have more than one correct spelling.

Please circle the spelling you prefer and then circle the way think it might be spelled in England and the United States.

Choice: 1. color 2. colour

In England the spelling is 1. color 2. colour

In the United States the spelling is 1. color 2. colour

Choice: 1. center 2. centre

In England the spelling is 1. center 2. centre

In the United States the spelling is
1. center 2. centre

Choice: (for the bank draft) 1. cheque 2. check

In England the spelling is 1. cheque 2. check

In the United States the spelling is
1. cheque 2. check

Choice: 1. gray 2. grey

In England the spelling is 1. gray 2. grey

In the United States the spelling is
1. gray 2. grey

c. Some words have different spellings (and often pronunciations) depending on how they are used in a sentence. In the following sentences, please choose the word you would normally use.

1. I hope to earn my driver's (licence, license) soon. [The Fowler Brothers claim that the "c" is always for the noun and the "s" for the verb; this is probably a more valid distinction for "advice/advise" where the noun and verb are pronounced differently than for "licence/license" where they are not, at least in B.C.

2. We asked for our teacher's (advice, advise) about the problem.

3. You will need to (device, devise) a new plan.

d. Words called "homographs" may be pronounced in two or more ways depending on the meaning. For example, wind rhymes with pinned when it is moving air, but with find when it describes a turning motion:

The wind howled through the mountain pass.

I asked mother to wind the clock.

The words row and sow are also homographs. Please use either row or sow in two sentences which show differences in meaning.

1. I had a row with my neighbor about his loud music.
The sow was allowed the run of the barnyard.

2. I intend to row my boat across the lake.
We will sow 100 hectares of wheat this year.

Please list any other homographs you know: _____

_____

e. Canadians generally pronounce the word film in one of two ways: as one syllable (film) or as two (fil-um).

Please circle the pronunciation which you use

film or fil-um

Which pronunciation do your friends use?

film or fil-um

Which pronunciation do adults you know use?

film or fil-um

Do you know any adults who use the other pronunciation? If so, please describe their language backgrounds.

_____

Thank you for your interest and assistance. As we said in the beginning, we do not think that anyone will be able to finish the survey completely. We would be interested in your response to the questions.

Did you have time to answer all of the questions you knew the answers to? Yes No

What was the most interesting question? (number) _____

Please tell us anything about the survey that you would like us to know. (use the back of this sheet if necessary).

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